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ABSTRACT

This document describes strategic planning at Tidewater Community College (TCC) (Virginia). The TCC strategic plan is the culmination of two years of intensive discussions among the college faculty, students, and board members, as well as the members of the South Hampton Roads community at large. This plan comprises three sections. The first articulates the core values and strategic vision of the college as developed from the strategic planning process. TCC's core values can be summarized as follows: access and successful student achievement; respect for individuality and a commitment to fostering unique strengths in different people; partnership with a range of constituencies; a vital and engaging learning environment; and service and accountability. The second section describes the strategic goals that will guide TCC's planning decisions in coming years. The college has defined five strategic goals: (1) strengthen the quality of the teaching and learning environment; (2) foster the development of the whole student; (3) diversify the funding base of the college; (4) contribute to the sustainable social, cultural, and economic growth of South Hampton Roads; and (5) leverage the benefits of a college that consists of multiple campuses, divisions, and programs. The third section describes some important means and measures the college will apply in achieving these goals. (JA)

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THE TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STRATEGIC PLAN

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BEARINGS ON THE FUTURE:

THE TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

November 2000

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INTRODUCTION

The Tidewater Community College (TCC) strategic plan is the culmination of two years of intensive discussions among the college's teaching and professional faculty, administrative faculty, classified staff, students, and advisory board members, as well as members of the South Hampton Roads community at large. Its purpose is to guide the college's decision-making as it works to become a national exemplar of a comprehensive community college in the twenty-first century. The plan establishes the foundations for specific decisions the college will make about how to allocate its financial resources, its time, and ultimately its human energy through the next three years. In providing a framework for annual planning, this document sketches out the broad contours of an institutional "to-do" list. Just as important, it helps the college identify a list of things not to do.

This process of institutional planning began in 1998 with the appointment of Deborah M. DiCroce as the college's fourth president. A central theme of Dr. DiCroce's presidency has been to engage the college community broadly in consideration of its strategic direction and planning goals. On the basis of many discussions with members of the TCC and extended community, President DiCroce formulated a vision for the college to become a national model of a comprehensive community college--i.e., the new millennium's strategic community college. This vision frames the college as a vital

academic resource, capable of directing its energies and shaping its programs to meet the changing needs of its many constituencies within the South Hampton Roads region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the international community of which it is a part. The strategic vision described in this plan is centered on a "mission core" of providing the highest quality education, both for students seeking a baccalaureate degree in a four-year institution and for those seeking an education in occupational and technical fields to prepare for entry into or advancement in the workforce.

No one can foresee the future with certainty or predict the full impact of societal change on a complex, multi-campus institution such as TCC. The many people who have helped to shape this plan do not presume to know everything about the opportunities and challenges the college will encounter in the years ahead. The vision and strategies described here are based nonetheless on thoughtful and informed conjectures about how the college can serve its constituencies in more effective ways. The principles and strategic goals contained herein will serve as bearings to navigate the future, guiding the college on a strategic course to improved educational quality and service.

This plan results from a sustained college-wide effort to define a vision and goals for its future as a strategic community college. The core values and strategic goals described here are derived from the work of numerous groups and individual members of the TCC community. The plan represents the dedicated and thoughtful work of the college's constituent groups, the President's Advisory and Planning Council, the authors of and contributors to over 40 commissioned white papers, and the President's

Executive Staff. An initial step in the development of the plan was the work of six focus teams appointed in 1998-99 to outline key areas of strategic concern; the reports of these teams were published in the 1999-2000 planning supplement to the 1998-99 vision document entitled *Portrait of TCC as a Strategic Community College*. Additional steps in the development of this plan included: the creation of a system of academic governance; the commissioning of a series of white papers, researched and written by members of the TCC community to consider the college's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in over 40 different academic or functional domains; the work of the College Strategic Roundtable in conjunction with the Knight Higher Education Collaborative; and the commissioning of a five-member college team to participate in a program on strategic leadership and organizational change, offered by the Wharton School and the Institute for Research on Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Finally, the college convened a series of breakfast meetings with members of both the TCC and the South Hampton Roads communities, including government and business leaders, in the course of completing a scan of the internal and external environments to identify institutional issues of concern and challenge as well as opportunity and strength.

This plan comprises three sections. The first articulates the core values and strategic vision of the college as developed from the strategic planning process. The second describes the strategic goals that will guide TCC's planning decisions in coming years. The third describes some important means and measures the college will apply in achieving its goals.

PART ONE: CORE VALUES AND A VISION

The following statements of core values express TCC's fundamental sense of purpose; they describe a set of human qualities the college seeks to foster among its own faculty and staff, among its students, and more broadly, among its regional partners and members of society at large. If the institutional core values provide a context for making strategic decisions, they also offer a sense of the college's highest ideals and aspirations, both to members of the TCC community and to those who engage with the college as students, community partners, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, and private donors to the institution and its causes.

The core values link TCC to an encompassing mission of higher education institutions large and small, public and private, two-year and four-year--that is, to be a major provider of intellectual capital for the nation and to contribute to the public well-being by helping to produce educated men and women who possess the knowledge, skills, and disposition both to achieve individual success and to advance a civically engaged citizenry.

Even as the core values link this institution with a broader tradition of American higher education, they seek to express elements that differentiate TCC from other community colleges in the nation. To a considerable degree, TCC and its four campuses are the result of dynamics that are particular to the region. The college's sense of itself, the course of evolution and development it has pursued, and ultimately the sense of defining values that motivate its choices and goals--all derive from a history and character that are strongly rooted in South Hampton Roads. In describing

what the core values mean to the college, TCC expresses what is unique and distinctive not only about itself but also about the constituencies it serves.

TCC's core values can be summarized as follows:

1. *Access and successful student achievement*
2. *Respect for individuality and a commitment to fostering unique strengths in different people*
3. *Partnership with a range of constituencies*
4. *A vital and engaging learning environment*
5. *Service and accountability*

ACCESS AND SUCCESSFUL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

TCC's commitment to educational access stems from its mission as a community college serving South Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth of Virginia with programs in both college transfer and occupational-technical fields. The college embraces a policy of open access, offering educational opportunity and the services necessary to support it to any student who brings the ability, interest, and willingness to learn. The college strongly believes in the strength of a learning community that makes a conscious effort to foster cultural and ethnic diversity as one of its defining characteristics. TCC welcomes students from a broad range of educational and economic backgrounds into its programs. Indeed, in many fundamental ways, the composition of the student body reflects the rich diversity of the region itself.

TCC is committed not just to providing students the opportunity to learn but to helping them succeed in learning. On every campus, in every division and department,

the faculty and staff of TCC share a strong dedication to students, and to helping students succeed in reaching their educational goals.

Respect for Individuality, and a Commitment to Fostering Unique Strengths in Different People

The most important asset of any higher education institution consists of the people it attracts as members of its learning community. TCC brings together faculty, staff, and students with a broad range of interests, backgrounds, and abilities. The college's vitality as a learning environment stems from the fact that its individual members embody an array of thoughts and beliefs about particular issues. It is a central value of the college to ensure that every one of its members is accorded respect and civility, regardless of the role he or she fulfills in the institution. The college also believes that institutional planning and decision-making are fundamentally strengthened when they occur through a process of open collegial dialogue and debate. TCC seeks an environment of caring and respect for members of its community, even when the views one expresses are not those of the majority.

Respect for individual talent and interest can also be seen in the range of learning programs the college offers to the citizens of South Hampton Roads. In both its occupational/technical and college transfer programs, the college seeks to make students aware of the multiple pathways to achievement while helping them pursue the choices most conducive to their individual needs. The college deliberately works to expand students' personal horizons through encounters with a broad range of human knowledge and exposure to different cultures--in South Hampton Roads, in the nation, and in the international community. Finally, TCC is committed to ensuring that members

of its faculty and staff have professional development opportunities that help them to remain current with emerging issues and trends in their field, as well as developments in pedagogy and technological applications.

PARTNERSHIP WITH A RANGE OF CONSTITUENCIES

With four campuses distributed among key locations in South Hampton Roads, TCC is a major educational resource for the region. At the same time, the college understands that it is only through its own strategic resourcefulness that it achieves full potential as a community resource. In affirming the development of partnerships as a core institutional value, TCC commits itself to work in active conjunction with an array of agencies, firms, and institutions that share the college's commitment to enhancing the region's intellectual capital and competitive capacity. The college seeks to foster more extensive partnerships with K-12 institutions, and to extend the number and scope of articulation agreements and other cooperative arrangements with four-year universities and colleges. It seeks to respond in a timely way to developments within the local business community, providing education and training programs that meet critical needs of such things as the tourism industry, the military, and the maritime community, which together give the region much of its distinctive character. The college regards its educational mission as a central element in serving the community and its citizens, helping to power the region's continued economic vitality and competitive capacity in a global economy.

In seeking to work more concertedly with other players in the region, TCC also affirms the value of internal partnerships that members of the college community form

across the boundaries of departments, academic divisions, and campuses. These internal working relationships enable the college to serve the region more effectively with educational programs and technical capacity to meet emerging educational needs.

A Vital and Engaging Learning Environment

A central value of TCC is to create an environment that imparts to students the excitement and vitality of learning. The college welcomes its students to a learning community that is characterized by academic and moral integrity, as well as a commitment to excellence and an openness to independent thought and inquiry. A primary component of a vital learning environment is the quality and academic authority of the faculty, as well as an institutional commitment to collegial governance in academic decision-making.

The college seeks to make possible a learning environment that accommodates a variety of teaching methods and motivates the interests of students of different backgrounds and learning styles. An environment of this sort is one that makes appropriate use of interactive technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning–in the classroom, as well as in a variety of applications for distance learning and information retrieval. In both its academic and its student services programs, the college seeks to focus on successful student experiences as the all-encompassing goal. Learning in this conception means instilling in students not just a knowledge of a particular subject but a broader sense of responsibility for one's own achievement, as well as a responsibility to others as citizens and human beings. Finally, in professing the value of a dynamic and engaging learning environment, the college seeks to provide

facilities and equipment that are conducive to effective learning, and that allow students to experience the current state of knowledge in a given field.

SERVICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The themes of service and accountability interweave every aspect of the college's programs and operations. In a very real sense, each of the preceding core values can be understood as particular expressions of an institution built on a foundation of service, and whose members hold themselves directly accountable--to students, to the standards of their own professions, and to one another as colleagues. Even as it places student satisfaction and success at the center of its planning, in a broader sense, the college views its strategic role as operating in the service of South Hampton Roads, its citizens and businesses, as well as its local, state, and federal government agencies. In both its college transfer and workforce development programs, TCC is an institution that embraces the concept of public accountability and that sees increased public expectations of service and performance as being wholly consistent with its own standards of achievement. Fulfilling an ethos of service requires the college to be in frequent communication with those it serves and to develop curriculum and programming that meet changing constituent demand in an expeditious way.

Making service a core value also requires members of this learning community to focus on the ways in which they serve one another as team players in fulfilling the college's mission. The college stresses the importance of collegiality and shared responsibility within a diverse learning community. To bring about such collaboration requires a heightened degree of individual trust and caring among professionals as

members of a single college. Ultimately the members of this learning community hold themselves accountable not only for their own performance but for that of the college as a whole.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TCC

The vision to which the college aspires is quite simply an ideal in which TCC fulfills each of these core values in even greater degree than it does today. The college seeks to become more effective as an educational resource to the region and the Commonwealth, known for its proactive responsiveness and its technical innovation. It aspires to increase both its reputation and its performance as a community college that creates educational opportunity for the citizens of South Hampton Roads, and that makes educational achievement the motivating objective in all its programs and interactions with students. The college seeks to build a learning community that more effectively brings together members of different ethnicities and educational backgrounds. It seeks to foster among students, faculty, and staff a heightened appreciation and respect for human differences as members of a college and a global community. It seeks to strengthen and extend its partnerships with other organizations, and to ensure that its learning environment continues to be enriched by the infusion of new knowledge, new talent and expertise, new technical applications, and new approaches to teaching and learning.

The college seeks to deepen its commitment to serve students and the region as effectively as possible, and to be accountable to its numerous constituencies in terms of both financial efficiency and educational performance. In aspiring to become

a national exemplar of a strategic community college, TCC commits itself to plan and to grow strategically--as a single college whose collective strengths are greater than the sum of its parts. It envisions a future in which decisions are made by strategic criteria that link directly to the institution's core values, as opposed to sheer opportunistic criteria derived from the promise of short-term gain for a particular campus or unit.

Finally, the college envisions a future in which it fulfills even more effectively the two tenets of its mission core: that is, TCC will be an institution devoted to providing a quality education to students preparing for the four-year baccalaureate degree, and it will provide students seeking occupational or technical training with programs of quality instruction that will enable them to succeed in their chosen fields. Ultimately TCC's vision for the future is one in which all of its members function as members of a strategic organization, understanding that the success of the whole depends on the creative interaction of the parts as they work in fulfillment of a shared purpose.

PART TWO: STRATEGIC GOALS

The following goals outline specific approaches the college will take as it seeks to become a national exemplar of a strategic community college. Each of the goals serves as a guidepost in the college's quest to enhance the quality of its academic programs while, at the same time, providing students with a quality of service recognized as being among the best in the nation. The college will invest in areas of strength and promise in order to solidify both the perception and the reality of quality in the college's academic and service programs. TCC will invest in areas of demonstrated

excellence while, at the same time, directing targeted funds to programs and initiatives that show exceptional promise. In the college transfer area, the college will benchmark itself to the most rigorous standards of achievement in four-year baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. In the fields of occupational-technical study, the college will look to business and benchmark its performance goals to the standards of the relevant industries themselves.

The goals of this strategic plan outline the kinds of investments that can help the college to realize even more effectively the two prongs of its mission core: that is, to be an institution devoted to providing a quality education to students preparing for the four-year baccalaureate degree, and to provide students seeking occupational or technical training with programs of quality instruction that will enable them to succeed in their chosen fields.

The strategic plan establishes a clear framework for future decisions TCC will make regarding the human and financial resources it will invest. While the strategic goals themselves do not commit to specific decisions, they provide the basis for the operational plan the college defines and the investments it makes in a given year. As particular issues or opportunities arise, the college's constituent groups and standing committees, the President's Advisory and Planning Council, the President's Executive Staff, and the TCC Advisory Board will turn to the core values and goals of this strategic plan as primary bearings in making college decisions.

The college has defined five strategic goals:

1. *Strengthen the quality of the teaching and learning environment.*

2. *Foster the development of the whole student.*

3. *Diversify the funding base of the college.*

4. *Contribute to the sustainable social, cultural, and economic growth of South Hampton Roads.*

5. *Leverage the benefits of a college that consists of multiple campuses, divisions, and programs.*

The following passages describe each of these goals and suggest a variety of actions the college might take in fulfilling them.

STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

TCC seeks to ensure that a student's experience in any of its programs generates a sense of both the power and the excitement of knowledge. To create a dynamic and effective learning environment will require that the college invest in academic programs, building on areas of demonstrated strength as well as areas of promising development. TCC will develop systems and procedures that enhance the quality of the learning environment while, at the same time, seeking opportunities to streamline or leverage effort through technology and/or a recasting of organizational structure.

The effectiveness of a learning environment depends in part on the college's commitment to providing students with services that help them to succeed in reaching their educational goals. The college will take steps to ensure that the academic and student service functions focus together on the goal of promoting successful learning in students. Every program and operation, every division, department, and unit in the

college must come to understand its role as impacting directly on the quality of the student experience--and hence on the likelihood of successful learning and persistence toward the degree.

Creating a more effective learning environment will require investments in more full-time faculty in several areas, as well as careful attention to the professional development and renewal of faculty. In addition, TCC will pursue new approaches to the support and supervision of adjunct faculty, helping them to feel a deeper sense of connection to the college and its educational mission. An effective learning environment also requires targeted investment in facilities and equipment needed to support learning.

One of the most important challenges facing the college is to ensure both the continued availability and the effective use of interactive technology to enhance teaching and learning. TCC students look to the college increasingly as a resource in the development of their own technological knowledge and abilities; they expect to learn both through and about technology. The college's Learning Resources Center exemplifies the transformational impact that technology can have in providing students with access to information in printed and electronic form, from the college's own holdings as well as from Web-based resources throughout the world. The Internet and World-wide Web make possible a much greater degree of collaboration among individual faculty, divisions, and campuses of the college. Incorporated in thoughtful and appropriate ways, these electronic tools can help students to increase substantially the depth and range of their learning experiences. The capacities of interactive

technology and media have advanced the college's internal discussion well beyond the dichotomy of classroom versus distance education. The operative questions have become: How can technology enhance the quality of teaching and learning, in face-to-face encounters as well as other modes of instruction? What content, pedagogies, and technologies are known to be effective in particular subject areas? The college will take particular steps to support the professional development of faculty in this area, providing them with the training and equipment that makes it possible to incorporate computer and Web-based technology into their own teaching.

Ultimately, investments in the learning environment are strategies to ensure that a future generation of faculty, staff, and students will continue to find TCC a dynamic venue for teaching and learning--a major academic resource supporting the growth and transformation of students, of South Hampton Roads, and of society at large.

Some examples, drawn from TCC planning activities, of steps the college could take in fulfillment of this goal:

1. Intensify efforts to create more full-time faculty positions.
2. Develop curriculum to maintain currency in academic fields.
3. Improve mentorship and oversight activities to make adjuncts feel a greater sense of belonging to the college.
4. Increase the range of professional development opportunities available to faculty, including college-based workshops.
5. Seek and maintain accreditation for selected specialized programs.

6. Increase the number of articulation agreements and other cooperative arrangements with four-year institutions to ensure maximum transferability of academic credit.
7. Foster more partnerships with K-12 institutions to coordinate effort and establish common expectations.
8. Incorporate assessment into more academic programs.
9. Improve the quality of advising and counseling through more explicit partnerships among faculty and student services staff.
10. Expand programs of student development and freshman orientation.
11. Improve student services, including registration, enrollment, and financial aid, through the incorporation of technology and the reorganization of effort.
12. Develop a college-wide program that supports the efforts of faculty members to incorporate interactive technology toward the improvement of teaching and learning.
13. Ensure that students on every campus have access to state-of-the-art computers, as well as training in the use of this technology for research and learning.
14. Invest in facilities to ensure that the college's physical environment is conducive to learning.
15. Ensure the availability of childcare services for students.

Foster the Successful Development of the Whole Student

In addition to educating students for success in a chosen field, TCC commits itself to instilling in students the broader values and skills to find personal fulfillment as members of a family, a workforce, and a community. The college seeks to provide students with a range of formal and informal learning experiences that foster a commitment to service and citizenship, as well as an appreciation for human diversity and the ability to see beyond differences of race, culture, or language.

One of the distinguishing features of TCC is its commitment to providing students with a foundation of knowledge that extends beyond a particular field or skill set. The college will continue to invest in its general education programs to ensure that students experience the contributions that different fields of inquiry have made to human understanding. Building on the success of its international education program, which is already regarded as among the best in the nation, TCC will invest in programs that offer students the ability to expand their frame of reference, to travel, and ultimately to deepen their experience and understanding as members of a regional, national, and global community.

Part of the challenge of fostering these broader skills is to ensure that students are able to succeed in both the early and later stages of their TCC experience. The college will strengthen the effectiveness of its developmental education program, taking more of a college-wide approach to ensuring that students attain the skills in math, composition, and reading needed to succeed in their courses of study. In many respects, developmental education is the most critical link to the successful fulfillment

of the college's educational mission. Such courses often constitute a student's first experience of college-level study; it is important that students come to recognize in these initial encounters the opportunity that results from developing the fundamental learning and communication skills that will help them to succeed in college and beyond. In developmental education as in other areas, the central concern must be to move from a focus on teaching per se to one that creates the conditions for successful student learning. Faculty must consider themselves not just as subject-matter authorities and dispensers of information but as mentors to guide and encourage their students' learning and development. A well-coordinated, college-wide program in developmental education, providing students with links to tutors and other resources, will help students develop a more pronounced sense of purpose as they discover their own potential to pursue new avenues of interest throughout their lives. TCC will develop more comprehensive and effective assessment techniques both to monitor student progress and improve the effectiveness of its learning programs.

Some examples, drawn from TCC planning activities, of steps the college could take in fulfillment of this goal include:

1. Develop a college-wide vision for general education, and engage a broader range of faculty in the design and delivery of a general education program.
2. Provide foreign language training in the context of other programs such as health care and law enforcement.
3. Develop an all-college course on civic responsibility and engagement.

4. Increase the number of internships and opportunities for service learning and volunteerism available to students.
5. Take steps to ensure a more consistent approach to developmental education across all campuses, and provide faculty with professional development opportunities to ensure their effectiveness in teaching developmental education courses.
6. Develop a formal exchange program with another institution of higher education abroad.
7. Make arrangements that allow TCC students to pursue part of their study in a non-western institution of higher education.
8. Develop a co-curricular transcript.
9. Enhance and support service programs directed to students for whom the pursuit of higher education may present special challenges, including students with disabilities, minorities, and women.
10. Provide opportunities for students to engage in deep, critical thinking about race-related issues.
11. Increase the number of mentorship programs that give students experience in working with practicing professionals.
12. Explore and apply best practices for welcoming international students to the college.

13. Enhance the profile of extracurricular programs available to students within the college, and underscore the important role of these activities, groups, and events in fostering leadership and citizenship.

Diversify the Funding Base of the College

In seeking to achieve its strategic goals, the college will pursue opportunities for increased efficiency in order to generate discretionary funds for reallocation. Ultimately, however, the college must seek to supplement the revenues provided by the state and tuition with other sources of funding to help it fulfill its strategic vision. Given the organizational nature of the college as an institution within the Virginia Community College System, TCC naturally regards the Commonwealth of Virginia as a *primary* investor in its mission and vitality. The individual localities of the South Hampton Roads region constitute an important *secondary* investor, as they support the college in the acquisition of physical space and site development and as they most recently partner with the college on unique joint ventures such as the Advanced Technology Center currently under construction at the Virginia Beach Campus. In order to develop a more competitive edge in the years ahead, however, the college will look to the private sector as an increasingly important *secondary* investor that can help grow the base of funds for strategic innovation. The college does not intend to approach private enterprise in the spirit of "looking for donations." TCC's conviction is rather that a private business or industry that invests in the college is ultimately investing in itself--strengthening the college's ability to make strategic innovations that serve the needs of students and the extended needs of the region, its business and industry.

In a fundamental sense, successful planning and fundraising go hand in hand. As the strategic planning efforts of the college increase the quality of its educational programs and services, the college strengthens its visibility and appeal as a candidate for philanthropic giving as well as business investment. Part of the effort to diversify the funding base will be to identify particular programs or initiatives that hold the promise of attracting external funding.

Some examples, drawn from TCC planning activities, of steps the college could take in fulfillment of this goal include:

1. Work systematically with business and industry to define and seek funding for educational programs that would benefit both themselves and TCC.
2. Develop an active alumni program and foster a tradition of individual giving to the college.
3. Extend the college's relationships with foundations and other philanthropies to learn of their funding priorities and identify areas of strength within the college that can address those priorities.
4. Highlight programs in which the college has particular strengths--such as international education, health sciences, and maritime--to demonstrate the quality of the institution and foster targeted giving to both current strengths and areas of promising initiative.
5. Strategically increase the number and range of areas in which the college successfully competes for grant funding.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS

As a community partner and resource, TCC plays a major role in the development of human capital for South Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The college will make investments that ensure its continued ability to serve the region with programs that answer to emerging needs in both the workforce training and college transfer functions. A key premise of this goal is that the vitality of the college is inextricably linked to that of the region itself. The college will increase its efforts to enhance the social, cultural, and economic vitality of the region through programs that provide students with opportunities to take next steps more effectively in their education and careers. This goal will be accomplished in part through an increasing number of internships, articulation agreements, and other arrangements allowing students to transfer more readily to a four-year institution. TCC will engage in partnerships with the community to make purposeful investments in the region's social, cultural, and economic vitality. The newly refurbished Loew's Theater Building exemplifies the key role the college will play in expanding the range of cultural activity within the region. Just as important, the college will enter into more concerted dialogue with regional business and industry to determine changing workforce needs and develop curricula to meet those needs.

Some examples, drawn from TCC planning activities, of steps the college could take in fulfillment of this goal include:

1. Make college resources such as the Horticulture Center at the Chesapeake Campus more active centers for community outreach.

2. Develop an expanded range of internship programs.
3. Link students more directly to employers through a combination of marketing, partnerships, and teaching.
4. Actively seek the input of program advisory boards regarding the development of curriculum.
5. Use the occasion of the Portsmouth Campus relocation pre-planning study to consider more broadly the question of how the college can increase the penetration of its programs and services to South Hampton Roads.
6. Increase the college's ability to tailor education to the needs of individual students through both credit and non-credit programs.
7. Implement a college-wide career planning and placement office to link graduates more effectively with employers.
8. Provide workforce training for ESL students.
9. Become more involved as a college in the regional effort to recruit and retain large and small industry, in part by developing mechanisms to respond rapidly to industry need for education and training.
10. Develop a more coordinated approach to the college's service relationships to health care, the military, maritime, and tourism industries.

Leverage the Benefits of a College that Consists of Multiple Campuses, Divisions, and Programs

While its individual campuses, divisions, and units have historically pursued their development in a largely independent manner, TCC commits itself to a future in which it develops strategically as a single college. Achieving any of the goals listed above

requires that the college think and act as a single institution, unified by a common vision, a common set of values, and common strategic goals. Behaving as one college means rethinking organizational structures and professional roles to encourage individual faculty, staff, and administrators to consider the opportunities for more effective delivery of education and service through a college-wide approach to both academic and student service programs. There is a repeated call through the white papers and other components of the planning process for a more concerted college approach to the delivery of a service or to the development and delivery of educational content. A strategic question will be to define the threshold where, in philosophical and operational terms, the college-wide values, standards, and procedures should translate into the more particular ethos of a particular campus, division, department, or unit.

Some examples, drawn from TCC planning activities, of steps the college could take in fulfillment of this goal include:

1. Take a college-wide approach to curriculum and program development, through the creation of discipline coordinators and other means.
2. Redefine faculty roles and affiliation from campus specific to college-wide.
3. Establish closer ties among departments of the same discipline on different campuses, using technology as appropriate, to establish common expectations and a more uniform approach to curriculum development.
4. Take advantage of the college's four campuses and its capacity in interactive technology to allow students to take courses in a greater range of times, places, and instructional formats.

5. Develop closer coordination between academic advising, academic support services, student counseling, and career placement services.
6. Review and restructure business procedures and information systems across all campuses and divisions, further extending the path the college has begun through the adoption of the PeopleSoft Student Information System as a part of the Virginia Community College System.
7. Create more strategic teams consisting of members of all campuses to address areas of college-wide concern or opportunity.

PART THREE: MEANS AND MEASURES

Partnerships: A means to an end. Partnerships are an essential element of the college's future, and a commitment to partnership is one of TCC's core values. The college will undertake an even more vigorous cultivation of partnerships as it works to achieve several of the strategic goals listed above. The concept of partnership expresses the concerted interactions the college will foster with external stakeholders of the South Hampton Roads region and the Commonwealth: With K-12 schools; four-year colleges and universities; business and industry; local, state, and federal governments, and the military as a special agency of the federal government. TCC will also build on the many partnerships for shared programming through distance technology that it has developed with other colleges of the Virginia Community College System. No less important than these external partnerships are the internal collaborations the college seeks to foster among faculty and staff of its four campuses.

Technology is also a means to an end. The effective use of technology is an essential element in every one of the college's strategic goals. Technology is not an end in itself but rather a tool to be employed by faculty, staff, and administration as they work to fulfill the college's vision and its strategic goals--i.e., to create a more unified college, build academic strength, enhance the college's learning environment, and work to serve students and regional stakeholders more effectively. Some believe that technology may become a dehumanizing force in the college and in society, diminishing the frequency and ultimately the desire for face-to-face exchange and learning. When employed in the service of common institutional values and goals, however, technology can become a positively humanizing force, increasing the range and the frequency of communication available to TCC, its faculty, students, and staff. Bringing technology into the classroom helps to transform this setting from a teaching-centered to a learning-centered environment, making the faculty member less of a rote conveyer of information, and more of a mentor and guide in students' learning processes. Technology will become increasingly important as a means of bridging the psychological distance between different campuses, divisions, and departments. Perhaps more than any other single tool, interactive technology will make it possible for the college to explore new approaches to teaching and learning, and to make the delivery of education and student services available in a variety of formats and settings.

Accountability: Links to every goal. The college will hold itself accountable for its progress in reaching these strategic goals. In calling for heightened

accountability, the college understands the need to establish clearly defined areas of responsibility--to identify "where the buck stops" in ensuring that a particular objective is completed. In the coming year, the Commonwealth of Virginia will begin to apply formal accountability measures to all its public colleges and universities. TCC will not only meet but also exceed the standards and expectations of the Commonwealth. Beyond the metrics applied by its public stakeholders, the college will hold itself accountable to its own internal standards of quality and integrity. Finally, the goals of this plan will provide an important set of gauges for measuring the college's performance in fulfilling its strategic vision. TCC's intention is that its five strategic goals will form the basis of an annual report card, a candid gauge of progress to be shared with both the internal and external stakeholders of the college. The college will welcome feedback about its performance from all the constituencies it serves.

CODA: TRANSFORMING TCC FROM AN "INSTITUTION" TO A "STRATEGIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE"

One of the strongest and most pervasive themes to emerge from the planning process is the affirmation of the college's commitment to become strategic. There is a widespread recognition of the need for the college to grow and invest in strategic ways--to choose among different visions of its future, and to determine explicit strategies for achieving its goals.

With this plan, the college seeks to transform itself from the confining mentality of an "institution" to that of a "strategic community college"--guided by its educational mission on the one hand and by an attentiveness to the changing needs and demands

of students, of the region, and of society at large on the other hand. The "institutional" frame of mind, in its extreme characterization, is one that supposes the college's sense of purpose, as well as its liveliness and well-being, are wholly dependent on funding from a state legislature or other public agency. Unless compelled by that external agency, an "institution" has little motivation to strive for increased efficiency or quality through innovation or a redesign of internal operations. An institution in this sense views the future very much through the lens of the present and the past; it tends not to respond effectively to new forms of competition, new technology, or new opportunities that result from changing markets and evolving societal needs.

In contrast to this, the strategic mindset sees and acts on the sense of opportunity presented by changes in both its internal and external environment. It looks to the future with a disposition to serve its constituencies in new and more effective ways. When confronted with choices about its future direction and initiative, it does not make impulsive decisions to proceed on the basis of short-term gain; instead, it weighs the prospect of innovation against its mission, core values, and own sense of institutional strengths. When it knows that it has the capacity to make a contribution to meet changing demand and need, the strategic community college is one that responds in a timely and effective manner, finding ways to invest in new initiatives--through increased efficiencies, reallocation, or the search for new sources of revenue to support targeted programs. Because the strategic community college is one that seeks to innovate as well as preserve, it inherently seeks a more diversified base of funding to meet its goals.

In adopting the strategic approach to institutional planning, the operative questions become: How might the college do things differently in order to make more effective use of its human and financial resources? What new models of organization and management might help the college to deliver educational services to individual students and to South Hampton Roads more effectively while helping members of the faculty and staff feel more fulfilled in their professional roles?

These are the questions the college will pose and pursue in the years ahead. The values and goals of this plan will provide a critical set of bearings to guide the college in its work of becoming the preeminent example of a strategic community college.